

11-21-1872

Mary Anne Van Epps to Ransom E. Aldrich, 21 November 1872

Mary Anne Van

Follow this and additional works at: https://egrove.olemiss.edu/aldrichcorr_e



Part of the [United States History Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Van, Mary Anne, "Mary Anne Van Epps to Ransom E. Aldrich, 21 November 1872" (1872). *Personal and Business Correspondence, 1871-1880 (Series 1.5)*. 17.
https://egrove.olemiss.edu/aldrichcorr_e/17

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by the Aldrich Collection at eGrove. It has been accepted for inclusion in Personal and Business Correspondence, 1871-1880 (Series 1.5) by an authorized administrator of eGrove. For more information, please contact egrove@olemiss.edu.

Diagon Illinois
Nov. 23^d. 1872
Saturday Noon

Dear Friends,

Ransom and Katy,

How can I at this time fully express to you our feelings of the overwhelming news contained in your Telegram of last Wednesday morning, which reached us the same evening.

When I went up from the store to supper after dark in the evening, I found wife and Sonnie sitting in sadness by the fire. Wife holding the little baby and the little fellow smiling while the others were in tears, they could not tell me, but pointed to the table in the dining room where on my plate lay the Telegram giving the same sad news of that young noble man, who only so few weeks since sat by our side at the same table and so interestingly whiled away the pleasant hours of his too short a visit. Richard on that occasion was full of conversation and we employed all the time allotted to me in the most constant conversation and occupation. He arrived here on Friday evening I think and came up from Sausal by freight train, having been off from the general route to go to Utica or Mansfield, I think. Out of the Illinois Central and in coming this way again he did not make connection until way in the night and would reach here at about 2 A.M. by coming on the freight he reached our house about 8 P.M. in the evening. When he came into our house in the evening I was surprised at his appearance, and exclaimed why Richard I am glad to see you, but do tell me if you are sick, he looked very badly that night I assure you. After resting and having some supper he seemed to improve and appeared better and we all visited until about mid-night I think. —

The next day I almost forget how we spent the time, he was at the house most of the day and I think had a ride with Louisa. Sunday I think he attended church with the family, I did not - after church, it being a very pleasant day, in the afternoon about 2 P.M. we went over to Richards, he and I alone, we had such a nice ride and visit all by ourselves - When at Richards we found no one at home, and wandered about the farm, the wood lot, Orchard and garden &c, possibly an hour or two, Rich. gathered some currants and seemed so satisfied with them. Not finding any of the family, I concluded to ride out a little further and went out about a mile beyond to the Brick Church and so by Richards other farms and then by way of Mr. Pennells and by the stable place home. On our way we came across a peculiar fungus or mushroom, it being highly colored a kind of pinkish yellow and golden I gathered quite a quantity and some very large sticky leaves, so we talked, laughed and had a very pleasant ride, for me to be remembered by, no wish life may last. We got home just a little tired, just enough to have an appetite for our supper.

Oh how I now wish I could bring to my mind every little incident that I might tell it all to you if ever so ^{un}important to others, how I shut up my eyes and try and think if I cannot bring to mind any word of his that I may cherish and treasure up - The talker of Parma, of Putnam of all our journey to New York City and Long Branch and much of the unexampled growth and progress of the great West. I think I read to him some of Twitts interesting letters from Oregon and California and so we passed the time, Oh how pleasantly and so unexpectated to all of us, he staid with us until Monday morning and took the 11 1/2 AM Train for Chicago. In the morning I urged him to remain over another day and he and I would again ride out into the Country but he thought he must go. I went to the Stone

bidding him good-bye and directed our
boy Melvin Brown to take him to the Depot
with the horse and buggy, he had his
departure with the family and I was not there.
Yet it did seem that it was not enough.
For he came down to the Stone on his way
to the Depot, got out of the carriage and
came in to bid us all good-bye & the
boys and all, our boy said to me
yesterday when I asked him if he
did not remember Richard, says I
do most assuredly, for he was so kind
to me and gave me a silver quarter
that I kept - so you see the reason given
- has been running through every thing
he did - He urged me to go with him
to New York and Boston and I was more
than half persuaded, yet I on the whole
thought it best not for me to go East then
if at all this year - Now when I think
it all over, it does seem that Richard
must thus make his last pleasant and
interesting visit. O that we may ever
cherish it and keep it green in our
memories - the good angel we trust
guided him and us - O these little, little
things so small to the casual observer
are they not very dear to us, when
properly considered. - first a few
very few journeyings, a few rides the
pleasant sunshine of Nature and the
more pleasant sunshine of the smiling
grating face of friends and then we
too must surely follow Richard to
the silent tomb. When the last sad
rites this day necessarily shock
the affectionate and tender hearts, who
have reared their first-born (and if
I may say so of their happy home-
hold) with such care and watchfulness
to manhood and usefulness, how is it possible
for words of mine in even tears and ad-
dressed to in the least alleviate the untold burden
And thus this world is vanity of vanities -

I had thought I must go down and
be there a few days with you - and yet
when I know how sick I was only
a few days since in Chicago, it did seem
under all the circumstances, that I must
forego this sad duty and privilege -
In fact, wife and I were both pretty
poorly just now. I had the hay fever
the next morning Thursday, over to the
- and about 4 P.M. he came over
and about 2 hours time allowed
to get ready in - Richd. did not think
he could go all alone and Mary Anne
thought she could not now endure the
trip, having considerable trouble in breaking
out a rash and her terrible shoulder diffi-
culty, so the time and circumstances, with
the terrible weather is our poor apology,
may we in heart this day be with you and
that we may learn that the friends were
there from a distance - Richard wrote
to me from Boston and also from N. York
where he was last and manifested so
much interest to impart all the infor-
mation in his power to our advan-
- age in a business point of view. -
That his labors and usefulness must
thus be cut off in the very culminating
period of manhood is a trial too
sad and indeed to dwell upon, we
can only add our sincere condol-
- ence, it is all the poor consolation
that we poor mortals can give to your
stricken hearts, may the good God
in his providence lead us and keep
us and that we may realize that we
too must very soon follow the way of
all the living. When time and inclination
may lead you, may you be able to
communicate to us all his sayings of
his sickness and death, believe me truly
and earnestly your friends in this day of
your great trial in this world, we remember
Mary Figgis and all in their tears and
sobs known only to their and your broken
hearts.

affectionately Wm. H. Van Epps

Wm. H. Van Epps is now at "Valley Forge" and may return there in a few days -